

stakeholders to fieldworkers representing countries, such as India and Sri Lanka. This book is the proceedings of this workshop with papers through twenty-two chapters, a picture stitched out of various case studies depicting the current state of mangroves in India.

The first chapter is a comprehensive account on the 'biodiversity of mangrove ecosystems in India' which outlines the current status of our knowledge and highlights gaps that need to be addressed for better conservation and management. The succeeding chapters deal with topics as diverse as reviews on overall mangrove species diversity in India, site-specific accounts of species diversity, flora-fauna interaction studies, coastal management in India, as well as specific case studies, including experiments and success stories, use of technologies in management (such as information technology, remote sensing, etc.). Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal (Sundarbans), Andaman and Nicobar, Karnataka and Kerala are the well-represented states among these chapters with various aspects of conservation. Absence of representation of Maharashtra in spite of its vast mangrove cover is unfortunate.

The book concludes with a page summary record of the workshop proceedings and recommendations. These recommendations emphasize mainly on capacity building among various target groups, including local communities, forest officials, researchers with respect to identification of health and habitat quality indicators, bio-prospecting mangrove resources, etc. The inter-institutional collaborations, development of databases, actual economic evaluation are some of the important key factors identified for strategic management of these ecosystems. Presentations of these chapters under various sections, such as diversity, case studies, management, etc. could have aided to make the story of conservation of mangroves in India more apprehensible.

The book has an attractive layout with around 156 spectacular coloured photographs, that liven the articles and makes reading pleasant. Certainly, it is not just 'yet another book on mangrove', unquestionably valuable for anyone who is concerned with mangroves, may it be a decision maker or an alert citizen.

■ SWAPNA PRABHU

3. SYSTEMATIC NOTES ON ASIAN BIRDS 2010. Edited by David R. Wells, BOC Occasional Publications No 5. Published by the British Ornithologists' Club in association with the Trust for Oriental Ornithology, Eastbourne, UK. Size: 24.5 cm x 17 cm, 148 pp. Paperback. Price not mentioned.

In 2000, the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Naturalis), Leiden, and the Trust for Oriental Ornithology (TOO) started a series known as *Systematic Notes on Asian Birds* (SNAB). Five issues appeared annually as a part of the journal *Zoologische Verhandelingen* and, after the merger of Leiden titles, a sixth issue was published in 2006 as part 5 of volume 80 of *Zoologische Mededelingen*. As Helen Baker, Chairman of British Ornithologists' Club (BOC), has written in her preface of this volume, the Leiden Museum terminated the agreement to publish the series, therefore BOC came forward and made an agreement with TOO to continue this series. Although the present issue has been published after a gap of four years, the numerical continuity of the papers in the series is maintained, and David Wells continues to be the editor.

The present volume has research papers on some of the most taxonomically difficult and challenging taxa of Asian birds, such as the babbler subfamily Pellorneinae of which there are five species under genus *Pellorneum* in South Asia. There are nine papers on the taxonomy of Asian birds and one Letter to the Editor. Admittedly, these papers, like earlier papers in this series, are quite esoteric and technical and may not be totally understood by a lay birdwatcher, but they are quite important for writers of field guides, and most importantly, extremely important for revision of the HANDBOOK

OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Sálím Ali and S. Dillon Ripley, which is long overdue.

As Editor David Wells has written in his Foreword, mainly six broad categories of papers were published in this series till now: 1) Preliminary reviews, 2) Types compilations, 3) Taxonomic revisions and realignments, 4) Nomenclatural revisions, 5) Bibliographic research, and 6) History of collectors and collections. The SNAB 2010 volume under review features five of these categories. It may not be possible to give details of each category here so readers are requested to read SNAB 2010.

Bird taxonomy is under great flux, particularly after the advent of molecular taxonomy. For example, in paper no. 68 of this series, Cibois *et al.* (2010) have shown that genus *Graminicola*, previously treated as Old World warblers, belongs to family Timaliidae (babbler). In another paper on leaf-warblers, genera *Phylloscopus* and *Seicercus*, Martens (2010) has reconfirmed that *Seicercus burkii* complex now comprises of eight species, mainly based on molecular genetics and vocalization. Earlier, papers (e.g. Martens *et al.* 1999, Alstrom and Olsson 1999, 2000) had proved that *S. burkii*, considered as one species, with many subspecies till then, is a highly complex group of golden-spectacled warblers and could comprise of 8-10 species. Two new species

to science, hidden in this complex were described: *Seicercus soror* Alstrom & Olsson, 1999 of Sichuan, China, and *S. omeiensis* Martens, Eck, Packert & Sun, 1999 of Omei, Shan, Sichuan, China. Similarly, the genus *Phylloscopus* is highly complex taxonomically and may still reveal many cryptic species. For example, *Phylloscopus calciatilis* from Vietnam was described as a new species as recently as 2009 (see Alstrom *et al.* 2009). 'Discovery' of this new species was mainly based on vocalization, DNA sequencing, and allopatry – the latter not always necessary in every case as many taxa occur together.

Another interesting point that has come to the attention of bird taxonomists, and which need further refinement through good field data, is vertical allopatry, i.e., different taxa occurring at different heights (at least during the breeding season), with sharp lines of contact along the gradient. This altitudinal stacking was noticed in the Himalaya and China in *Seicercus* and *Phylloscopus* complex. For instance, in the Himalaya, 8–10 species of *Phylloscopus* occur sympatrically, but not necessarily syntopically.

In another paper in this volume, Mlíkovský (2010a) has reviewed grebes of family Podicipedidae. He recognized six grebe species of *Tachybaptus* and *Podiceps* occurring in the region covered by SNAB. The main morphological differences are in body size, and size and shape of the bill.

The Asian Little Grebe *Tachybaptus* (earlier placed in *Podiceps*) *ruficollis* differ from European and African birds in having yellow, not red eyes. The other differences mentioned in this paper are the western populations (breeding from Iraq to India) that are short-billed and have much white on their secondaries, whereas eastern populations (eastern China to Japan and mainland SE Asia) that have longer bills and much less white on their secondaries. Jiri Mlíkovský has provisionally recognized four subspecies of *Tachybaptus ruficollis*.

Four species of *Podiceps* are found in SNAB regions, with three definitely occurring in India: Red-necked *Podiceps griseigena*, Great Crested *P. cristatus* and Black-necked *P. nigricollis* grebes. Horned Grebe *P. auritus* is vagrant in India, with one confirmed photographic record on the Kosi river near Ramnagar in Uttarakhand (Drijvers 1994).

In another paper in this volume, Mlíkovský (2010b) has described the type of Podicipedidae of SNAB region. Such details may not appeal to a regular birdwatcher, but are important to unravel taxonomic and nomenclature issues.

SYSTEMATIC NOTES ON ASIAN BIRDS (SNAB) is a highly technical series that should be present in any good library dealing with natural history and ornithology.

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4. CONSERVATION AT THE CROSSROADS: SCIENCE, SOCIETY, AND FUTURE OF INDIA'S WILDLIFE by Ghazala Shahabuddin, 2010. Permanent Black and the New India Foundation. Ranikhet. Size: 21.5 cm x 13.2 cm, 244 pp., Hardbound. Price: 595/-.

Permanent Black, a publishing company, is known to publish thought-provoking books on conservation issues, and this book is one of the finest examples. As the sub-title indicates it is about conservation science, society, including the people who live and depend on natural resources for their livelihood and the future of India's diminishing wildlife and how to reverse this trend. The author is a well-read and well-

travelled conservation biologist, with deep interest in civil society issues. Her work in Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, is greatly appreciated by the local communities and conservationists. As she says in the beginning "This book is an attempt to try and understand the shortcomings of the varied strategies that have been adopted for biodiversity conservation by India since Independence, both in terms of policy as well